

An Important Message from Jennifer Toth, Deputy Director of Transportation

National Teen Driver Safety: “It Takes Two; Shared Expectations for Teens and Parents for Driving”

Getting a driver’s license can be an exciting time for teens, but an anxious one for their parents and guardians. Several factors, including inexperience behind the wheel and distractions, put teen drivers at high risk for serious crashes. The statistics reveal these facts:

- According to teendriversource.org, the greatest lifetime chance of crashing occurs in the first six months after licensure.
- Based on total miles driven, the fatal crash rate for drivers 16 to 19 is four times higher than for drivers ages 25 to 69.
- Seventy-five percent of serious teen-driver crashes are due to “critical errors.” The three most common which account for nearly half of all serious crashes, are:
 - Lack of scanning to detect and respond to hazards,
 - Driving too fast for road conditions and
 - Distractions inside or outside of the vehicle.

National Teen Driver Safety Week occurs this month. This year’s theme is “It Takes Two: Shared Expectations for Teens and Parents for Driving.” You’ll find excellent resources at the Teen Driver Source website teendriversource.org/for_parents.

If you’re a parent or guardian, you’re urged to work with your teen to promote safe, skilled driving. You can start by setting the right example: Follow the rules of the road, always wear a seat belt, don’t speed, and never use a cell phone or other mobile device when driving. You can also reduce your teen driver’s crash risk by providing support and monitoring driving behaviors and establishing rules before and after licensure.

While your teen is old enough to drive, he or she needs you more than ever to instill the importance of safety. According to a report released by The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute:

- Teens are twice as likely to wear seat belts; half as likely to speed; 30 percent less likely to use a cell phone while driving; and 70 percent less likely to drink and drive if parents or guardians set rules, monitor behavior, remain supportive and involved,
- Teens who said their parents or guardians set rules and paid attention to their activities in a helpful supportive way, were half as likely to crash.

Lastly, it’s never too soon to start teaching children about the importance of safe driving. One of the best ways; teach them to be safe passengers. **Countdown 2 Drive** is geared for pre-teens and

emphasizes that today's safe passengers are the safe drivers of tomorrow. Learn more at countdown2drive.org/.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Taylor". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "J" and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.